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SUBJECT: GUIDANCE: MIDDLE EAST CONSULTATIONS, AUGUST 19

¶1. (U) This is an action request. USUN may draw from para. 2 building blocks when making its intervention during the upcoming Middle East consultations in the Security Council on August 19.

¶2. (SBU) Begin building blocks:

I thank Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco for his report.

The United States remains deeply committed to the cause of peace in the Middle East based on the two-state solution with Israel and an independent and viable Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security. President Obama continues to lead efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement that includes peace between Israel and the Palestinians, Israel and Syria, and Israel and Lebanon. To achieve that comprehensive goal, he has charged Secretary of State Clinton and Special Envoy Mitchell with efforts to create the context for the prompt resumption and early conclusion of negotiations between the parties.

As we seek to move towards peace, all parties have responsibilities. For Israelis and the Palestinians, these center on their fulfillment of their previous commitments and obligations. Israel's obligations include stopping settlement growth, dismantling outposts, and improving access and movement for Palestinians in the West Bank. Palestinian obligations include continuing with security cooperation and reforms, strengthening the rule of law, and ending incitement.

There has been some movement toward fulfilling these responsibilities. Israel has begun to take positive steps to improve the living conditions of Palestinians and create circumstances that can lead to the establishment of a viable state. Over the last several months, it has removed a number of checkpoints and eased conditions at others in the West Bank. The Israeli military has also withdrawn troops to the outskirts of four cities. If expanded and sustained, these changes should have a significant impact on Palestinian freedom of movement, economic development and growth, and the overall quality of life.

The Palestinians have clearly made progress in their responsibilities on security. Nearly 2000 Palestinian security personnel have already completed training in Jordan and deployed in the West Bank. Another full battalion of 500 men has recently begun training. These efforts must continue -- in conjunction with the invigorated efforts to promote the rule of law -- so that Palestinians can live in the secure environment that they

deserve and can demonstrate that Palestine will be a viable and responsible state in the region.

We hope that the recently-concluded Fatah party congress, which reaffirmed President Abbas's leadership and brought in a new generation of officials to serve in key positions, will serve to further these efforts towards peace.

We are also engaging with the broader Arab world to encourage Arab states to act in the spirit of the Arab Peace Initiative and begin the process of normalizing relations with Israel. They also should aggressively and tangibly support the Palestinian Authority under President Abbas.

We now need the Arab states to outline clearly what they are prepared to do for peace. We are encouraged by calls in the Arab world -- from Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates -- to support President Obama's vision of a comprehensive peace by taking steps toward recognizing Israel's rightful place in the region in the spirit of the historic Arab Peace Initiative, and urge Arab states to commit to specific gestures towards Israel now.

These positive developments make it all the more imperative that we work together to support the Palestinian Authority in its nonpartisan, transparent programs to improve the lives of ordinary Palestinians throughout the West Bank and Gaza. The World Bank and IMF have endorsed the Authority's 2009 budget and the accounting controls it has put in place. On July 24, Secretary Clinton announced the transfer of 200 million dollars in direct budget support to the PA, and we commend the European Union and the government of Saudi Arabia for their recent generous transfers to the Palestinian Authority. However, the PA's domestic revenue still is insufficient to cover all of its needs for Gaza recovery and to continue security and institutional reforms. We thus call on other countries, particularly others in the region that wish to see a strong and viable Palestinian state, to join us in supporting the PA.

In conjunction with this call for assistance, the United States continues to urge the government of Israel to ensure that UN and other humanitarian agencies can carry out the distribution of necessary humanitarian assistance unimpeded throughout Gaza. This includes food, fuel and medical treatment. By ensuring the delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, we will help foster conditions in which a Palestinian state can be fully realized. The United States is the largest contributor to UNRWA; its humanitarian operations in Gaza provide food distribution for 800,000 people and education for 200,000 children, and run 17 primary health clinics in Gaza. This year, UNRWA also put on summer camps for 250,000 children to promote tolerance and human rights. USG assistance through the World Food Program also provided 2,074 metric tons of food commodities to over 150,000 needy beneficiaries in Gaza. Other USG assistance to Gaza goes to supporting NGO hospitals and clinics, including procurement and distribution of medical equipment and supplies, and providing plastic sheeting for repairs to damaged buildings, as well as blankets, milk powder and other nonfood items to Palestinians in need.

All UN member states, including those in the region, must work to ensure the end of the illicit smuggling of arms and ammunition into Gaza, lest Hamas restock its arsenal and spark further conflict. Thus, we support reopening Gaza's border crossings -- with an appropriate monitoring regime involving international and Palestinian Authority participation consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 1860 and based on the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access.

Although some Hamas leaders claim that they are prepared

to cooperate with regional peace efforts, their positions continue to fall far short of the essential building blocks of an independent and viable Palestinian state. Hamas has a responsibility to the Palestinian people to actually work toward the establishment of a state. If Hamas is willing to move beyond talk and focus on results, it will renounce violence and terror, recognize Israel, and accept previous agreements between the parties, including the Roadmap. These commitments represent the bedrock of any negotiations toward peace and the only way to realize legitimate Palestinian aspirations for statehood.

We look forward to meeting with Arab League ministers and to a Quartet meeting in New York in September to review the latest developments in this area. The Quartet remains the most effective instrument for marshaling the international community's diplomatic efforts in support of Middle East peace.

With patient, determined, and persevering diplomacy, we can help to make a difference and we can assist those in the region to achieve the peace and stability that people on all sides long for.

End building blocks.
CLINTON